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Literary Selections.

THE GAME AT CARDS.

"The darkies are mine," says the gamester, striking his fist upon the table; "show them up, and let us see what they look like."

The young planter, who had lost sent the boat servant below for John and Helen. The passengers awaited the appearance of the servants in silence, for a long time, but they came not. The servant had informed them of the change of owners, and they dreaded to see their new master. They were attached to the young planter and his wife, and did not like to leave them; besides they had children of their own at home, and what was to become of them?

The winner began to wax impatient at the delay and exclaimed:

"Come, Danton, hurry the niggers. They must be quicker than this when I send for 'em, or they'll never know what hurt 'em."

The young planter's aristocratic face flushed crimson at this rude and brutal exclamation, but he made no reply. He was about to send another servant for John and Helen when his purpose was stayed by the appearance of Mrs. Danton. Her husband had been gaming, and she had peen weeping ever since the boat left Cincinnati; and we were now far down the Mississippi. No wonder, then, that she was pale and wan, and that her eyes looked as though they had been nearly wept away; but she was extremely lovely, nevertheless.

Although many years have passed since that evening, I can see the sorrow stricken young wife now, as she glided unto the table and looked her husband in the face. He could not bear up under her gaze. He had lost all their money, and in a fit of desperation had also staked and lost the two slaves. Laying her little hand on his arm she said:

"Is it true, Charles, that you have lost John and Helen?"

Her husband made no reply; he could not even look up.

The passengers were fast gathering around and the scene was growing painful. My father (who had come north to fetch me from school and, was taking the longest possible way home,) was holding me by the hand, and I knew by the tightening of his grasp that he was becoming much excited.

As Danton did not seem inclined to answer his wife's question, the gamester roughly said:

"Yes ma'am; John and Helen are mine; and I want too see 'em quick."

Danton sprang to his feet, and stooping across the table, hissed in the teeth of the gamester:

"Villain! don't you presume to speak to my wife again."

The look with which this menace was accompanied was perfectly blasting, and made the swarthy and pitted face of the gamester turn white.

How inconsistent is man? That accomplished and high born husband could deliberately jeopard the property and corrode the happiness of his wife, hour after hour, day after day, and year after year, but he could not bear that the man whom he had chosen for a companion should even as much as speak to her.

"Yes, Mary, John and Helen are lost," he said at last, as he let the gamester from under his gaze; "they are lost, and it can't be helped now; so don't let us have a scene about it."

"I shall not let them go," said Mary, firmly, "and I shall have a scene about it. I did not say a word about the money; but now that you have palved them away ——Oh Charlie!" and she leaned her head on her husband's breast.

"Ah! here they come!" said the gamester, as John and Helen approached.

John was a powerful and fine looking mulatto; his face indicated unsual intelligence and kind heartedness. Helen was much whiter than her husband, and remarkably handsome. The gamester's evil eye gleamed as he surveyed her, and turning to a savage looking man near him, he said:

"I'll sell you John in the morning, Hammond; but Helen I shall keep—at least for two or three days."

"I'm agreeable," said the slave trader, for such he was; "but I'd like the gal as soon as possible."

A look of indignation ran around the group at this brutal colloquy. My father's grasp grew tighter still; and encouraged thereby, I whispered to him to buy John and Helen himself, but he shook his head and motioned me to keep silent.

"I tell you I shall not let them go," repeated Mrs. Danton, addressing the stranger. "They were brought by my mother's family; besides they have children at home, from whom it would be cruel to separate them."

The gamester and the slave dealer exchanged sneers at Mrs. Danton's sentimental reasons for not letting the slaves go, and her husband said:

"It can't be helped now, Mary, let us go to our room."

"O, Missus, don't go and leab me wid dat man," shrieked Helen; "I shall die or jump overboard. O, don't leab your own true Helen; who sabed your life when you fell in de byoo."

"I shall not leave you Helen. Do not be alarmed. I——"

"Bress de Lord for dat," interrupted Helen; I know we'er safe now; kase you allers does jest what you say you will."

"I think it's about time this nonsense was stopped," said the gamester, rising from his seat. "You acknowledge Danton, that these niggers are my property; consequently they are mine, and I've a right to do what I please with them; no bill of sale is neeessary between two gentlemen. And now, you, just come along with me, and don't make a fuss, or I'll have you flogged and put in irons."

The scene was now extremely exciting. John drew Helen to his side, and clenched his teeth and fists, while their young mistress stood close in front, as if with her feeble arm she could protect them from the clutches of the gamester! A bloody fight seemed inevitable; when a young New Englander, who had been very quiet during the whole trip elbowed his way to the table, and asked the gambler at what sum he valued his slaves.

"Two thousand dollars, said he, "do you want to buy?"

"I have only a thousand dollars," the young man answered, "I will give you that for them."

"No, sir, but I'll stake 'em against a thousand dollars, and play you a game of poker for the pile-"

"I don't understand the game," said the New Englander.

"What game do you play?"

"I have played a few game at all fours, but I never gambled for a cent in all my life."

"Well, I'll play you a game at all fours, then, if you like, and stake the niggers against your thousand dollars."

To the surprise of every one present, the young man excepted the challenge, called for a new pack of cards, staked his thousand dollars, and the game commenced—the gamester having the first deal.

As the company drew more closely round the table, it seemed as though a watchmaker's shop were in our midst, so distinctly we heard the ticking of the watches.

The first hand the New Englander made three to the gamester's one, at which a buzz of pleasure ran through the group. The second hand the gamester had three to his opponent nothing; the third hand they each made two, which left the New Englander two to go, while the gamester had but one to make, and it was his turn to beg. This was a great advantage, and everybody seemed to give up the the thousand dollars as lost.

The New Englander dealt the cards with a steady hand, however, and turned up the jack of hearts, which placed him even with his antagonist; but when he raised his cards I saw that he had not a single trump in his hand, and his adversary was hesitating whether to stand or beg; if the former, the game was his to a certainty; if the latter, there would be another chance for the slaves. After drumming on the back of his cards for a short time, he looked at the New Englander to see if he could determine by his manner what it was best to do, but the young Bunker Hill met his gaze without flinching, and there they sat a long time gazing into each others eyes.

"Run the cards," said the gamester at last. I could have hugged him for his mistake.

Bunker Hill again dealt, and the queen of spades was turned. Every heart stood still as the cards were for the last time lifted.

"They are mine!" shouted the New Englander; or rather they are yours madam," said he in a milder tone, to Mrs. Danton, as he threw down the ace of spades.

The beautiful and impetous southron threw her arms around the winner's neck, and three deafening cheers (in which even the slaveholder joined) to the satisfaction of the audience.

Many years after I met the New Englander in Mississippi, and claimed his acquaintance, on the score of having been one of the most enthusiastic partizans on the night of his well remembered triumph. He had prospered in business and become rich. He was making his annual pilgrimage to the family hearthstone—a stone which has more potent charms for good, than that at which kneel Mahomedan devotees in the city of their prophet. He said he had never touched a card since that memorable game; that the thousand dollars he then risked was the sum total of his savings for many toilsome years, but that he staked it, and played the game with a perfect conviction of success.

Danton had sought him out, and kept up the acquaintance ever since; and Mrs. Danton could now travel the world over with her husband, without fear, for he had forsworn gambling from that never to be forgotten night.

THE TRAP VOTE.

In the year 1847, the Legislature of Ohio granted the citizens of certain counties the privilege of voting upon the License question. In many towns there was an earnest opposition to the measure, and the friends of No License were called upon to act dilligently and energetically.

I was at that time doing something for "the cause" in the northern part of the state of Ohio, and I made a tour of Erie county for the purpose of assisting to call out the opponents of License on the election day. I visited Castalia, a little town near Sandusky city, and lectured to a large audience, one Saturday evening, and I announced that, at the close of the lecture, the sense of the meeting would be taken upon the License question. The traffickers of the village heard this, and three of them, each with a right-hand man, came up to the church and seated themselves in the first pew from the pulpit. When I stood upon the platform they were directly before me. The secretary of the meeting hinted who they were, and I suspected for *what* they were there, and determined that if they voted in behalf of their cause, it would be under a "big load."

After presenting the advantages of total abstinence and arguing the evils of intemperance in a general bearing, I spoke of the question at issue, and proposed taking a vote from which something could be told how the people of Castalia regarded the licensing of men to degrade and impoverish their fellows.

I requested that every person in the house who was in favor of such action at the polls as would diffuse blessings thro'out the community, should rise to his or her feet. All the ladies and about four-fifths of the men present, stood up.

Then, said I, if there is a man in this house who would vote for an increase of taxation—for the support of crime and pauperism—for the breaking up of families—who would make kind husbands cruel—who would see wives and mothers driven from their fire-sides into the pitiless storm—who would hear orphan children weep for bread—if there is a man here who would vote raiment from prattling babes, and see mothers poison their dearest children, and have father's rob their own fire-sides of the fuel which made them cheerful and kept their little ones from chilling frosts—in short, if there is a man before me who wishes to vote for the destruction of all that is lovely and happy in society, *let him stand up!*

Not a man arose,—and I remarked, "I conclude that all the voters of Castalia present are opposed to License." Then up sprung the rumsellers who sat the end of the pew before me, and crowding his hat on his head with nervous energy, he stamped up the aisle as if he were treading on reptiles which it was necessary to crush with his heels! His compatriots did not follow him, but one of them was heard to say, "Mean, d——d mean advantage;" and another one muttered, "If that fellow comes down town to-morrow he shall be licked."

I went down town, but the flogging was not forthcoming. Castalia gave a respectable majority for "No License," but whether on account of the trap vote, "deponent saith not."

Consumption—Fresh Air.—Dr. Marshall Hall, an eminent English physician, says, "If I were seriously ill of consumption, I would lay out of doors day and night, except in rainy weather, or mid-winter; then I would sleep in an unplastered log-house." He says that consumptives want air, not physic—pure air, not medicated air; plenty of meat and bread. "Physic has no nutriment; gaspings for air cannot cure you; monkey capers in a gymnasium cannot cure you, and stimulants cannot cure you."

THE CHARGE OF THE BRITISH LIGHT CAVALRY.

From Colburn's United Service Magazine, printed in London, we quote the following thrilling description, by a soldier, of the memoriable charge of the British cavalry at Balaklava, the charge which has been immortalized by the muse of Tennyson:

"Captain Nolan, who had gone to the redoubts, now halted. I next heard a heavy fire, and he galloped back towards us. We were by this time in motion, and Lord Cardigan was preparing to act. The trumpet sounded 'stand to horse!' then rapidly followed 'mount, walk, trot, gallop!' [and again the trumpet finally sounded the 'charge!' and we were off. I had just time, and no more, to see the effect of the first fire of the Russians.—Captain Nolan, who had lifted his hand, as I thought in signal, was close upon us. His hands were up, outstretched. He seemed to reel and rock in his saddle;—out of his breast there poured forth a red streaming tide and he looked as if his chest had been broked in I saw him no more. The brave fellow—none braver in the army, nor a bolder horseman—was killed! Down the descending slope, over ground that seemed ploughed, we went like a rushing hurrican, with Lord Cardigan at our head, and we 'went in,' a regular 'buster': (a forcible and favorite expression of our friend;) I felt, he continued, 'as I found my hose begin to bound under me, and gripping my sabre, which I had fastened to my wrist with a twisted silk handkerchie—I felt at the moment my blood thicken and crawl, as if my heart grew still and quiet like a lump of stone within me. I was a moment paralyzed, but the snorting of the horses, the wild headlong gallop, the sight of the Russians before us becoming more distinct, and the first horrible discharge, with its still more horrible effects came upon us, and emptied saddles all about me. My heart now began to warm, to become hot, to dance again, and I had neither fear nor pity! I longed to be at the guns. I'm sure I set my teeth together as if I could have bitten a piece out of one. Every man was seized with a cannibal hunger, and could have eaten a squadron without salt.'

Imagine, reader, if you can, seeing like this man, a 'Vision of Sudden Death,' like an awful apocalypse, breaking upon the eyes of 600 men—imagine what those unutterable sensations of his must have been, for they cannot else be conveyed. Death exultant and howling, reeking red-hot out of the front battery, hurling shell, grape and round shot—death from a battery on the left flank, hissing and demonic—death from a battery on the right, tempestuous and insatiate—death from thousands of infantry whose fatal precision of aim was only embarassed by the smoke and movements of the riders. An unquenchable hell of fire bursting forth with the roor of rending volcanoes, and doing the work of human lives with approximate effect—and above all, clear and shrill, above the thunders of the vomiting cannon, and the volleying fusilades, rose the shriek of men and horses in pain and agony, the trampling of hoofs, the shouts of defiance, the wild grand jubilant 'hurrah!' of men who, having cast aside all fear, only desired to grapple with this ghastly 'Death' in any form more closely, and in the thirst for vengeance for their fallen comrades, had ceased to care for wounds or pain, and in their utter dreadlessness had acquired an invincible contempt for every other consequence—imagine all this if you can, and follow our soldier into the scene which now took place among the guns.

'The first thing I did, once within the guns and 'following my leader,' was to cut clean off, the hand of a Russian gunner who was holding up his sponge against me. He fell across the gun carriage glaring savagely, but I cared little for that and I had seen too much in the first few minutes of the 'charge' to soften me. Bodies and limbs scattered in fragments, or smashed and kneaded together, and blood splashed right into my face were now no novelty. It was something more than kill or be killed. It was kill whether or no, and any way, don't mind 'it,' and I didn't. I had now my hands full of work, I can assure you. I had three Russians to deal with at once, who evidently meant me mischief. A Hussar made a desperate slap at my head, and with 'cut number two' gave him so tremendous a slash in the neck that it almost sickened me to look on, quickly as it was done. I had now to wheel in order to meet a Polish Lancer, who was just charging me full tilt. I saw that the butt was fixed against his thigh, that he gave his lance a slight quiver and that he seemed to know how to use it too. I bent down slightly on my saddle, received his lance on the back of my sword, which passed over my shoulder, at the same instant the point of my weapon, through the mere rush of the horses passing each other, entered his breast, and went clean through him, coming out at his back so that I was forced to draw it out with a wrench as he rolled over the crupper. A Cossack was now upon me, but I reined back in time, his aim failed, and he shot by my horse's head, and I then after him, wounding him in the shoulder, and knocking man and horse over with my own, so that I was all but unseated, and then my 'busby' was knocked off with a ball, but I hardly missed it then.

'I now heard Colonel Shewell's voice, and saw the old man waving his sword on the other side of the guns, as if calling us together, and we got round or thro', the best way we could, and formed in line, every Russian that was at the guns being cut down, and the cavalry that had ventured to come to their help being driven back, some across the aqueduct, and even to the Tchernaya, but only to renew the charge, for that they would let us return without a trial to stop us was not a likely thing. As we were in line I was just saying "Sergeant Riley you're out of place," (he was on the left, and ought to have been on my right) but he did not speak. I looked up at him, his eyes were fixed and staring, and his face was rigid and white as a flag-stone. I saw he was dead, though yet seated on his horse, and that too was shocking to think of and look at. I hadn't time to say more, for the Colonel sings out "Sergeant, sergeant, just look there, there are reinforcements," as a body of Lancers came right upon us, whom I took to be our own, the 17th, and the sergeant shouts out, "By —— they're Russians!" "Keep together, men," cried the Colonel—ah! he did show himself a man, ill, laid up as he had been, and I'm sure fitter then to be in his tent that day, but he was too plucky—"keep together," he said, and "death or glory! but we'll ride them down!" and slap into them we went again, cutting, parrying, slashing right and left, and then the flank batteries opened, and the riflemen picked us off, and the firing grew hotter, the smoke thicker and denser, while the Russians in blind fury were killing their own men as well as ours, as if they didn't care who they hit, so long as they could hit at all—nor what they sacrificed, so long as they could sacrifice us—and they didn't often miss, I can tell you. Then the trumpeter sounded, and "three about" was the word, so I knew that Lord Cardigan must be at hand, and if going "in," was like charging a legion of devils, and the devil's imps cannonading us, the getting back was ten times worse, and I almost gave it up a gone game, as did many more, but all determined, I'll vouch for it, to make every drop of blood worth a Russian life.

We seemed already to have cut and hacked our way through thousands, and were going at it once more, as if we meant to ride down the whole Russian army, with the old Colonel ahead of us, and through showers of grape, and canister, and Minnie balls, we were fairly cutting our way as a man would cut thro' a thick-set hedge with a bill hook! A regular avalanche of cavalry had burst around us, thinking no doubt, that where we had got to we ought to remain, having done quite enough for one morning, and we were quite of a different mind. Horses were running about without riders, and while men that had fallen wounded were endeavoring to catch them, they were shot down like dogs. We could not help them—we could hardly help ourselves, and the Russians did not seem to care about any prisoners. One thing I'll mention worth notice; as we went back, Major de Salis caught up a wounded bandsman, and lifted him on to the second charger he had brought him, and bore him safely back through the fight.

"I hardly know how we got back to the brow of the hill from which we had started, for every now and then I was faint, and the pain of my hand was horrible at times, at others it grew numbed again. We got to the top, however, in small detachments, and at last the Commissary-General Crookshanks served us out some rum, which was a God-send to us wearied, wounded, and knocked about as we were. We then formed in two divisions, and Lord Cardigan rode in front, and counted us, and made but 133 men out of the 607 sabres that had gone down with him! So I leave you to guess the slaughter that had been made of us in the short half-hour all had been begun and finished—not to speak of the Russians that lay piled among the guns and on the plain, to between 2,000 and 3,000 men, as I heard."

FLAGELLATION.

Among the religious absurdities of a former age may be reckoned the severe penances inflicted by the church for the purpose of purifying the spirit by mortifying the flesh; and of these perhaps the most extraordinary was that of flagellation. This was administered freely by the priests, and was submitted to even in public, with much apparent fortitude and humility, by the most powerful nobles in the land, and in some instances, by crowned heads. These flagellations were sometimes extremely severe, and nothing but an excess of religious enthusiasm, or a keen sense of one's own *interest*, could have induced the serfs and nobles of Europe in past ages to submit their naked shoulders to the lash.

Among the most remarkable intances of sovereigns who have been publicly flagellated, may be mentioned that of Raymond, Count of Thoulouse, whose regal authority extended over a very considerable part of the south of France. For having given protection to the Albigenses, Pope Innocent III., much incensed, published a bull of excommunication against. His dominions were seized—nor could he succeed in effecting their restoration until he submitted to be flagellated by the Legate of the Pope; who stripped him to the waist, at the entrance of the church, and drove him up to the altar in that situation, all the while beating him with rods?

The penance of Henry II. of England, is well known. The whole body of the priesthood were deeply incensed at the murder of Thomas-a-Becket and strove to spirit up the people to a revolt—the King was obliged to submit to public flagellation in order to preserve his kingdom—from which it would appear that it is a desirable thing to be a King. The manner in which he expiated his errors did not differ materially from that imposed on Raymond, Count of Thoulouse.

The last instance of a sovereign who received this kind of correction from the church, was Henry IV. of France, on the seventeenth of September, 1595; this was to absolve him from excommunication, and free him from heresy. But this Prince was allowed an indulgence, then seldom granted—viz: to *receive flagellation by proxy*! and it is universally allowed that this is by far the most comfortable manner of receiving this salutary chastizement. His proxies on this interesting occasion were Messieurs D'Ossat, and Du Perron, who to recompense them for having suffered for good of the church and state, were afterwards made Cardinals. During the performance of the ceremony of absolution in the church of St. Peters, and while the choristers were singing *Miserere mei Deus*, the Pope, at every verse, beat, with a rod, on the shoulders of the two proxies. But as a further indulgence to the King, who was thus disciplined by proxy, the two gentlemen, who represented him on this occasion, were suffered to keep their coats on during the operation, and the lashes it is said, were not laid on with any degree of vigor. And sometime afterwards, a report having been spread that these gentlemen had been compelled to strip themselves naked in the church and undergo a dreadful flagellation, M. D'Ossat contradicted it in a document since published, in which he stated that the dicipline was merely a nominal operation, necessary in order to comply with the rules set down in the Pontificial, but, "they felt it no more than it had been a fly that passed over them, so well coated they were." Be this as it will, it *is* a matter of historical record, that Henry II. of England, and Henry IV. of France, Kings of the two most powerful States in Europe, publicly submitted to the dicipline of flagellation, the one to preserve his crown the other, to qualify him to take possession of it.

Habits.—Like flakes of snow that fall unperceived upon the earth, the seemingly unimportant events of life succeed one another. As the snow gathers together, are our habits formed. No single flake that is added to the pile produces a sensible change; no single action creates, however it may exhibit, a man's character; but as the tempest hurls the avalanche down the mountain, and overwhelms the inhabitants and his habitation, so passion, acting upon the elements of mischief, which pernicious habits have brought together by imperceptible accumulation, may overthrow the edifice of truth and virtue.

☞ Why is conscience like the strap on the inside of an omnibus? Because it is an inward check to the outward man.

WILL IS POWER.

How frequently we hear doubts expressed as to the possibility of acquiring knowledge without assistance!

One morning in the year 1849, a young peasant girl obtained an interview with the great vicaire of the cathedral of one of the western cities of France. In a manner that was at once modest and firm, she told him that having heard of his kindness in procuring situations for governesses, she had come to him in the hope of obtaining some employment.

"But my child," replied the reverend Abbe, "you cannot teach without a diploma; and in order to obtain a diploma, you must go through an examination.—What instruction have you received?"

"In my childhood, Monsieur l'Abbe, I learned to read and write, and then I served my apprenticeship to a mantuamaker. I am now constantly employed in working with my needle, and earn about three pence a day; but this does not do, and so I wish to become a governess."

"My poor child, to read and write is something, it is true; but it is not enough. You must know how to spell; and you must know grammar, geography, and something more than the first four rules of arithmetic, all thoroughly; and you must also have some idea of composition."

"I think, Monsieur l'Abbe, that I could pass an examination in these things tolerably well; for when my day's work was over, I have always devoted part of the night to studying the books which I contrived to buy out of my savings. On Sundays, too, I could read. I have come on purpose to beg that you will be so good as to examine me, and tell me whether I may hope to obtain the diploma of the first degree."

"The first degree! but you do not know what it is my poor child; it would be impossible. The examination is very difficult; you must know arithmetic perfectly, also something of geometry and cosmography; you must understand music, both singing and playing on an instrument. It is not likely you have learned the piano or the harp."

"I have not; but, Monsieur l'Abbe, does the law say positively the piano or the harp?"

"No! the law says simply that it is necessary to know enough of music to be able to play on an instrument. Those I mentioned are most usually learned at schools, that is the reason I named them; but I think that perhaps they might be satisfied with the guitar."

"Well, Monsieur, as the law does not name any particular instrument, I am satisfied, for I have taught myself to play on one instrument."

"And what is that?"

"Here it is:" and the girl took from her pocket a—flageolet.

At this sight the Abbe burst into a peal of laughter. She colored deeply; but imagining, no doubt, that he did not believe in her musical powers, she raised the instrument to her lips and the Abbe stood amazed.

The excellent priest, who had himself been one of the people, judged rightly that a peasant, who had taught herself not only to play, but to play so well, could be no ordinary person. He asked her age. She was twenty-five.

"I will examine you now," said he.

The replies of the young peasant were astonishing; and he wondered, but in silence, at the knowledge which this poor country dress-maker had obtained by her own unaided efforts.

"You may," he said, "with perfect confidence present yourself before the commission of examiners; I will arrange that you shall not be required to play.—This flageolet, on which you perform so well, would excite laughter and witticisms which must be avoided."

The young peasant went before the commissioners, and all were amazed at the variety of real and profound knowledge which she had acquired in her evenings, and pondered on during her long days of toil. Received by acclamation, she now is at the head of an establishment.

We have heard this story related both by the grand vicaire, and by a lady, the intimate friend of our heroine, who has often heard her say to her pupils, "Will is Power."

Tobacco.—The distinguished Dr. Warren, of Boston, says, "In the course of my experience and observation, I have not found one individual who began to use tobacco largely and freely, and persisted in it, who had a sound brain or sound spinal marrow."